

adopted, and equally forcible arguments are urged. In its defence. Thus, when the Wabondei of Eastern Africa are about to build a house, they take care to cut the posts for it when the moon is on the increase ; for they say that posts cut when the moon is wasting away would soon rot, whereas posts cut while the moon is waxing are very durable.¹ The same rule is observed for the same reason in some parts of Germany.²

But the partisans of the ordinarily received opinion have The moo: sometimes supported it by another reason, which introduces ^g^ed us to the second of those fallacious appearances by which source of men have been led to regard the moon as the cause of growth moisture_ in plants. From observing rightly that dew falls most thickly on cloudless nights, they inferred wrongly that it was caused by the moon, a theory which the poet Alcman expressed in mythical form by saying that dew was a daughter of Zeus and the moon.³ Hence the ancients concluded that the moon is the great source of moisture, as the sun is the great source of heat⁴ And as the humid power of the mcpn was assumed to be greater when the planet was waxing than when it was waning, they thought that timber cut during the increase of the luminary would be saturated with moisture, whereas timber cut in the wane would be comparatively dry. Hence we are told that in antiquity carpenters would reject timber felled when the moon was growing or full, because they believed that such timber teemed with sap ;⁵ and in the Vosges at the present day people allege that wood cut at the new moon does not dry.⁶ We have seen that the same reason is

assigned for
the same practice in Colombia.⁷ In the Hebrides
peasants

Street, W., 12th May 1912. Mr. ³ Plutarch, *Qitaest.*
Conviv. iii. 10.

Schloss adds that "as a matter of 3; Macrobin,
Saturn. viL 16. See

practical observation, timber, etc., further, W. H. Roscher,
U6er Selene

should only be felled when the moon *und VcrwancUes* (Leipsic,
1890), pp.

is waning. This has been stated to me 49 *sqq.*

not only by natives, but also by English * Plutarch and
Macrobius, *Il.cc.*

mining engineers of high repute, who Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* ii.
223, xx. 15

have clone work in Colombia." Aristotle, *Problemata*, xxiv. 14,
p.

¹ O. Baumann, *Usambara itnd seine* 937 B, 3 *sq.* ed. I. Bekker
(Berlin).

Nachbargbiete (Berlin, 1891), p. 125. ⁵ Macrobius and Plutarch,
Il.cc.

² Montanus, *Die deiitsche Volksfoste*, ⁶ L. F. Sauve, *Folk-lore des*
llautes-

Volksbrciucheunddeutscher Volksglaubc^ Vosges, p. 5-
p. 128. ⁷ Above, p. 136.